

Our Ref: JRF/TS/JW16.3839.DP

Your Ref: CPBC



28 February 2020

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Planning Services

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Dear Sir/Madam

**Repair, Renovation and Improvement of Private Road Infrastructure Including Carriageway, Footways, Kerbs, Gullies, Surface Water and Foul Drainage (Except Where Statutory Responsibilities Exist), Lighting, Routing of Utility Infrastructure, Guarding of Pedestrian Footways, Reinstatement of Correct Property Boundaries
Manor Trading Estate, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 4PS**

I enclose an application for planning permission as described above. We will pay the application fee of £234.00 online. The documents are set out in the attached 'Schedule of Application Documents'.

The Manor Trading Estate (MTE) is the only Industrial area in Benfleet of any significance. All others are either on Canvey Island, or else their primary activity has changed to retail warehousing such as has occurred at Stadium Way, Rayleigh Weir. A peculiarity of MTE is that the estate roads are privately owned. There are approximately 97 businesses on the estate at present, all of which rely on the private roads to gain access to their businesses, whether that be by staff, clients, service and delivery vehicles.

The significance of this should not be underestimated. The whole road infrastructure includes the carriageways, footpaths, kerbs, drainage infrastructure (foul and surface water), utilities (gas, water, electric), street lighting. Investment in the maintenance, repair, management and upkeep of the roads has been neglected by the former owners in the long term. The physical and operational deterioration of the road infrastructure is readily apparent. Their condition is desperately poor as demonstrated by the submitted photographs and as experienced when walking and driving around the estate.

The roads are almost impassable in places because of the extensive damage. This poses a danger to all road users including pedestrians and cyclists. Vehicles which use the roads are also exposed to the possibility of damage. In respect of drainage, many of the drains are blocked, broken and/or inefficient. Some businesses have taken matters into their own hands privately connecting into the drains, with instances of foul waste being connected into surface water drains. There are no public records of the drainage runs throughout the Estate. However, the submitted Road Improvement Plan (P201) identifies the extent of infrastructure surveyed by the Applicant.

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Furthermore, it is important to note that there are no wayleaves for utility companies to use the estate roads for the routing of their infrastructure. There are no maps or plans available of where any of the utility infrastructure currently runs within the MTE. Part of the renovation process is to find the utility routes through the road system, assess their suitability/legality, to make robust provision in perpetuity and to plot the network for future maintenance and accountability.

The physical and visual deterioration of the roads has encouraged some business owners, in places, to encroach upon the footways with their yard areas and forecourt parking. The poor quality of the environment has created a vicious circle of degradation and carelessness. Consequently, the estate now tends towards the lowest common denominator of environmental quality which promotes increasing and ongoing instances of environmental lawlessness. This includes extensions and yards created without the relevant permissions, the siting of containers and skips in ad hoc places around the estate, fly-tipping, littering, parking on the footpaths and unauthorised signage. Please refer to the submitted Aerial Plan (M003) which provides evidence of the aforementioned issues.

The majority of the roads are unlit leaving the estate in darkness at night and many of the buildings are devoid of basic maintenance and repair. That is not to say that all industrialists are of the same mind, but in the face of an apparent losing battle, environmental standards are as low as can be with little incentive to change. The net effect of this is only to attract low value tenants and the promotion of vacancies. These add to the cycle of deterioration.

However, the Council formally recognises the MTE as a site of significance in its Economic Strategy and has long cited 'environmental improvements' as being of primary importance in the future of the estate. This application is crucial for the future prosperity of the estate, bringing significant and much needed investment which, until now, has never proceeded beyond aspiration. Furthermore, this application corresponds positively to the objectives of adopted Policy ED7 of the current Castle Point Local Plan (1998) which states:

"The council will seek to encourage environmental improvements within employment areas."

In respect of the Pre-submission Local Plan (2019), Section 11 *Building a Strong, Competitive Economy*, Paragraph 11.10 lends further support to the proposed improvement works. It states:

"...there is a need to improve the quality of employment areas and provide greater flexibility in the supply of premises to attract investment and encourage indigenous companies to stay in the borough as they grow."

Given the foregoing, the proposal aligns with the current and future aspirations of the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for the estate.

The Applicant has put a substantial amount of resources into this project, assembling an action plan which can practically deliver the qualitative improvements for the estate roads. This planning application specifies those works necessary to bring the private roads up to a suitable operational and environmental standard. The cost of these upgrade and improvement works will require a considerable financial input from the road owners.

This application proposes to bring the road up to a satisfactory and usable condition. It shall be executed in sections to minimise disruption to existing businesses and users attending the estate.

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The existing street lighting on the estate will be renewed or upgraded where required. The renewed and refurbished lighting will improve the ambience and safety of the MTE, acting as a deterrent for acts of vandalism or theft.

New Armco road edge barriers will be installed in locations throughout the estate where no footways exist at present, facilitating and protecting pedestrian movements. Existing pathways will be improved realigned and raised where necessary. The current roads have relegated the safety of pedestrians to unacceptable levels. Reinstatement and guarding of key footpaths will elevate pedestrians to a position of better safety.

New road marking and street signage will be introduced across all roads, where there are little to none currently in existence. This will greatly assist visiting customers and delivery vehicles to navigate accurately around the estate. This will be further supported by the implementation of parking restrictions to prevent parking on footways and the blocking of roads through indiscriminate parking/loading.

Taking all the submitted details into consideration, it has been demonstrated that the proposal is policy compliant, based on a substantive and deliverable plan and would make a significant improvement to the overall working environment of the MTE. I therefore respectfully request that planning permission is granted for the application without delay.

Please would you register the application, notify me of the application reference and timetable and supply a receipt for payment of the application fee. Should you have any queries relating to this proposal, please do not hesitate to contact me. I will otherwise make contact with the case officer in due course.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'R Forde', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Russell Forde BEng (Hons) DipTP (Dist) MRTPI
Principal Director

Enc. Schedule of Planning Application Documents

c.c. ACT Roadways Ltd
SPL

Date:	28 February 2020
Our Ref:	JRF/TS/JW/16.3839.DP
Planning Portal Ref:	PP-08538924
Applicant:	ACT Roadways Ltd
Application Site:	Manor Trading Estate, Benfleet, Essex, SS7 4PS
Proposal:	Repair, Renovation and Improvement of Private Road Infrastructure Including Carriageway, Footways, Kerbs, Gullies, Surface Water and Foul Drainage (Except Where Statutory Responsibilities Exist), Lighting, Routing of Utility Infrastructure, Guarding of Pedestrian Footways, Reinstatement of Correct Property Boundaries

Schedule of Planning Application Documents

1. Online LPA Submit Letter and this Schedule of Application Documents
2. Online Application Form including Certificate A
3. Online Application Fee £234 plus £25.00 Planning Portal Service Charge
4. Online Drawing Register and Plans as set out on Register
5. Online Photographs 1 – 16
6. Online Schedule of Works

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SPL <i>(Internal use only)</i>	1	Yes	F